



RELIGIONS AND BELIEFS OF ANCIENT CHINA

Ch. 8/Sec. 3

TWO MAJOR BELIEF SYSTEMS

- **Confucianism** and **Daoism** developed during the Zhou Dynasty
 - Philosophies, set of beliefs about the world and how to live
 - Influenced all parts of society
 - Religious practices became connected to this philosophies

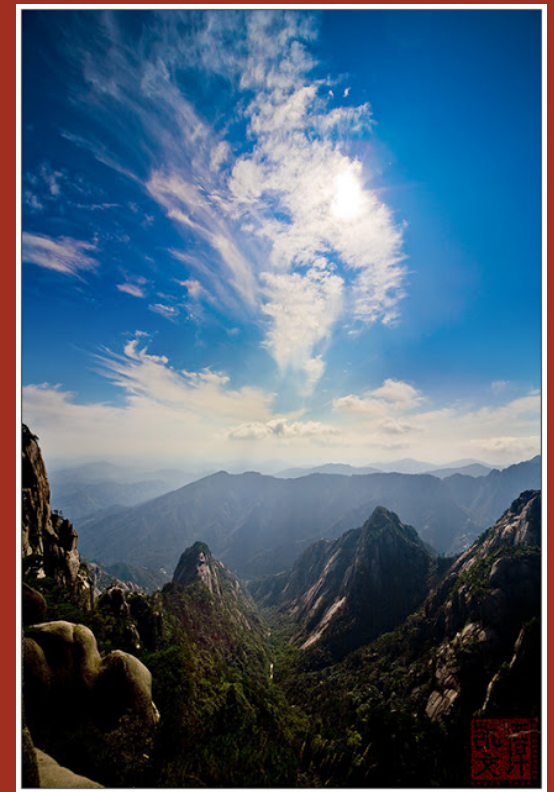
百鍊劍

精舍百鍊出孤懷梅徑寒苔
吳昌碩書



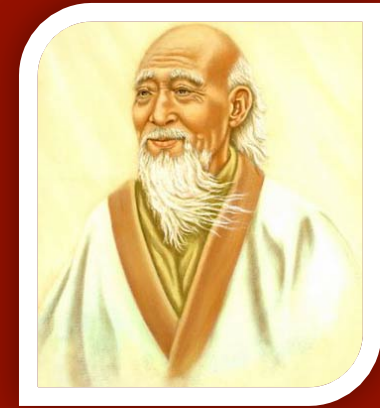
BELIEFS IN SPIRITS

- Ancient Chinese believed the Earth was a flat square
 - Heaven stretched above
 - Heaven and Earth were populated by spirits
- Heaven was the home of the spirits of the sun, moon, stars, and storms
- On Earth, spirits lived in hills, rivers, rocks, and seas— ruled daily lives of the people
 - Good spirits made rain fall and crops grow
 - Helped sailors travel safely
- Harmful spirits made it unsafe to walk the roads
 - Brought bad luck
- Most important spirits were their ancestors
 - Believed family lived on Earth after death in the spirit world
 - Important to honor the dead





TWO MAJOR PHILOSOPHIES



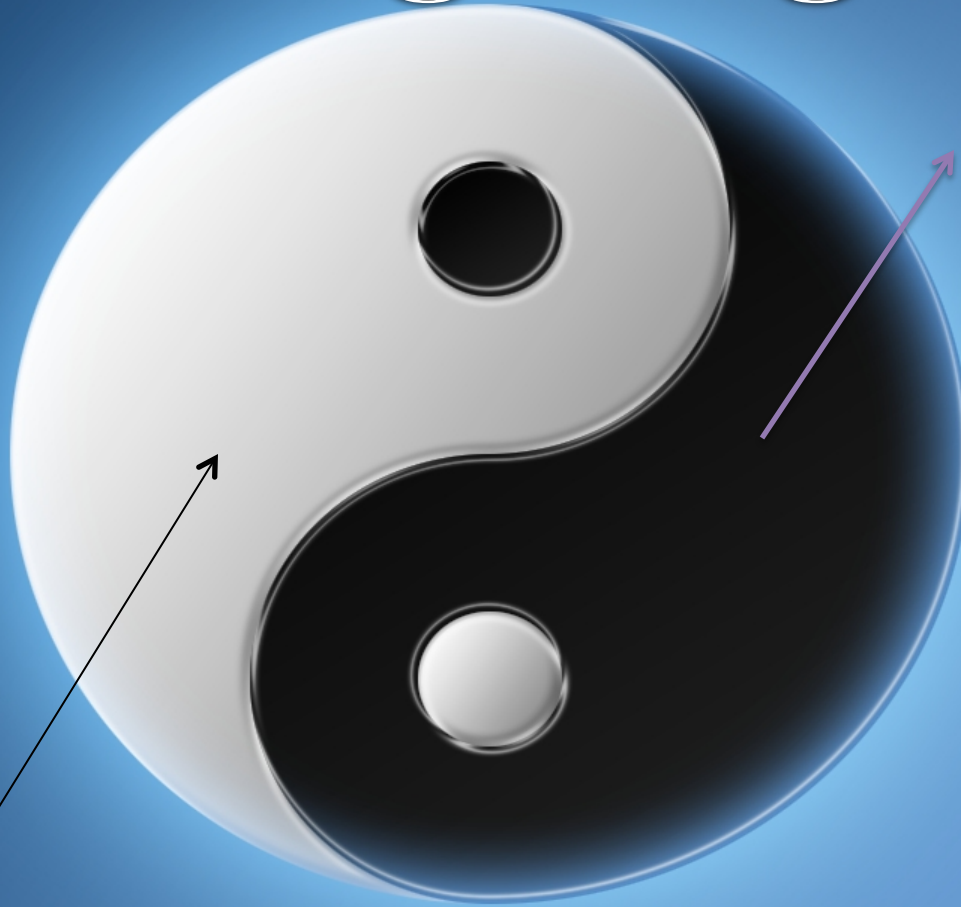
Daoism

Confucianism

- Confucius was a great thinker
 - AKA “the first teacher”
- Background
 - Born to a poor family
 - Impacted by the Era of Chaos
 - Held low govt. positions
- Began his own school
 - Students collected his teachings (*The Analects*)
 - Had a passion for learning
 - Believed all people could be good
- Central idea
 - Respect family
 - Respect government/authority
 - Respect in return

- Emphasizes a simple way of life
 - Goal is to follow the Dao (natural way of the universe)
- Founder (Legend)
 - Laozi: wise one who wrote down his beliefs
 - Small book called *Dao De Jing*
- Yin and Yang
 - Beliefs in 2 great forces— opposites working together

YingYang



Chinese/
Daoist
belief that
there are 2
forces in
the
universe

Yang: side of men, the sun,
things that move quickly:
river, summer

Ying: side of
women, the
moon,
stillness:
ponds,
darkness,
quiet, winter